

Leviticus 18 - Thursday, January 7th, 2010

- Leviticus 18 is going to have to be another one of those studies that is rated PG13, and may even need to be rated R and restricted.

18:1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,² "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'I am the LORD your God.³ According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances.⁴ You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the LORD your God.

- Here, the Lord is, in effect, addressing a serious problem as it relates to the children of Israel now that He's delivered them from Egypt.
- Now that He's got them out of Egypt, He's got to get the Egypt out of them. Here, He's forbidding them to engage in certain practices.
- The Lord is saying that He doesn't want them doing as the Egyptians did, and they're not to be doing what the Canaanites are doing.

5 You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.

- This is interesting because God is saying that if we obey His commands and live sexually moral lives, we will live healthy and holy lives.
- Conversely, if we disobey God and live sexually immoral lives, we're subject to sexually transmitted diseases that may cost us our lives.
- The statistics bring this to bear in what it costs people who, like the Egyptians and Canaanites, practice sexually immoral lifestyles.

Focus on the Family – "One in five adults in the United States has an STD. It is estimated that 19 million STD infections occur annually, almost half of them among youth ages 15 to 24." http://www.solutionsphc.com/files/STD_Fact_Sheet.pdf

- I have to warn you at this point that it's going to get real ugly because we're going to read about the forbidden practice of incest.
- First of all, it's important to understand that these sexual practices were actually considered a form of worship to certain pagan gods.

As one commentator wrote; "The Persians, for example, encouraged marital unions with mothers, daughters and sisters, on the ground that such relationships had special merit in the eyes of the gods."

6 'None of you shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him, to uncover his nakedness: I am the LORD. 7 The nakedness of your father or the nakedness of your mother you shall not uncover. She is your mother; you shall not uncover her nakedness. 8 The nakedness of your father's wife you shall not uncover; it is your father's nakedness. 9 The nakedness of your sister, the daughter of your father, or the daughter of your mother, whether born at home or elsewhere, their nakedness you shall not uncover. 10 The nakedness of your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, their nakedness you shall not uncover; for theirs is your own nakedness. 11 The nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, begotten by your father -- she is your sister -- you shall not uncover her nakedness. 12 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister; she is near of kin to your father. 13 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, for she is near of kin to your mother. 14 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother. You shall not approach his wife; she is your aunt. 15 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law -- she is your son's wife -- you shall not uncover her nakedness. 16 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness. 17 You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, nor shall you take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness. They are near of kin to her. It is wickedness. 18 Nor shall you take a woman as a rival to her sister, to uncover her nakedness while the other is alive.

- It's important to know that the phrase "to uncover nakedness" which is used 17 times chapter 18, is a euphemism for sexual relations.
- That being said; "to uncover nakedness," can also mean anything that would be deemed inappropriate sexually as it relates to incest.

19'Also you shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness as long as she is in her customary impurity.

- We saw this back in Leviticus 15:19 were they were commanded to not have any sexual relations with a woman during her period.

20 Moreover you shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife, to defile yourself with her.

- This speaks of adultery, plain and simple. If one has a sexual relationship with another man's wife, he has defiled himself with her.
- It is for several reasons that God forbids this not the least of which is the defiling and corrupting effect it has on the ones who practice it.

21 And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.

- It's interesting that now God will go from talking about specific sexually forbidden practices to the worship of the false god "Molech."
- The reason for this is that this is how the pagans would get rid of all the unplanned pregnancies resulting from their sexual relations.
- I suppose you could say that this was an ancient form of abortion in that they murdered the unwanted babies that they had conceived.

"It was very common in those days to offer infant sacrifices to the god Molech. They would heat this little iron god, to the point of the iron glowing a red hot glow, and then they would put their babies in the outstretched arms of this little iron god, and sacrifice their babies. Cause them to pass through the fires to Molech. God is strictly forbidding this. This was a common practice in Canaan. And on any special occasion, you'd bring one of your babies and sacrifice it to your pagan God. If you were going to build a house, you want good luck for the house, you would take your baby and sacrifice it to your god, and then the baby's remains would be put in a jar, and placed in the walls of the house, as you build the house, it would be encased in the jar of the wall of the house. Many of the houses that the archeologists have unearthed, in the walls, they have found the jars with the remains of the infants who were sacrificed as a good luck potion, really, in the building of the houses, and God is strictly forbidding these kind of things."

Pastor Chuck Smith

One commentator writes; "Excavations have uncovered evidences of infant skeletons in burial places around heathen shrines. Solomon built an altar to Molech at Topheth in the valley of Hinnom. Manasseh in his idolatrous orgy, also honored this deity. Josiah desecrated the Hinnom valley altar, but Jehoiakim revived the cult. No form of ancient idolatry was more abhorrent than Molech worship."

The scriptures are replete with references of babies being sacrificed to Molech:

2 Kings 23:10; Jeremiah 32:35; 2 Kings 16:3; 21:6; 2 Chronicles 28:3; Isaiah 57:5; Jeremiah 7:31; Ezekiel 16:20,21; 20:26,31; 23:37,39)

- Again, at the risk of being redundant, it's very important we understand how that this was in fact how the pagans worshipped their gods.
- The sad reality is, these gods are still worshipped today. While we don't worship them by their ancient names, they're the same gods.

ANCIENT NAMES OF SOME FALSE GODS	CONTEMPORARY NAMES OF THE SAME GODS
The god Baal.	The god of power and prestige.
The goddess Ashtoreth.	The goddess of sex and fertility.
The god of Mammon.	The god of money and success.
The god of Molek.	The god of practicality and prosperity.

22 You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination.

- Here God forbids the practice of a sexual relationship with the same sex because it is a sin and because it is an abomination.
- God doesn't say that sins like this are bad because they are forbidden, rather, they are forbidden because they are bad, "for us!"
- One interesting side-note here; there is never any unwanted pregnancies for those practicing the sin of homosexuality or lesbianism.

23 Nor shall you mate with any animal, to defile yourself with it. Nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it. It is perversion.

- I don't want to or need to say anything other than bestiality is an abhorrent sin involving unspeakable perversion making man an animal.
- The King James seems to indicate that people who practice any form of bestiality can actually go insane when they engage in this.

24'Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you.25 For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants. 26 You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you 27(for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled),28 lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you.

- Here God makes it very clear, that any nation who defiles themselves in this perverted way, will be judged and vomited out of the land.
- You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out that this is true. Every culture that's been perverted in this way has become extinct.

29 For whoever commits any of these abominations, the persons who commit them shall be cut off from among their people. 30'Therefore you shall keep My ordinance, so that you do not commit any of these abominable customs which were committed before you, and that you do not defile yourselves by them: I am the LORD your God."

- Here's the "why" behind the "what" of God's commands to not commit these abominations thus defiling and damning themselves:
- He says; "I am the Lord your God, You belong to Me, and I forbid you to worship me in the way that the world worships their gods.
- Perhaps this begs the question of how does God want me to worship Him. All we've just been shown is how "not" to worship Him.

- Allow me to attempt an answer to this question this way; "sometimes we need to un-learn something before we can learn anything."
- We'll see this in verse one of the next chapter where God once again reiterates the theme of the book of Leviticus, which is holiness.

Leviticus 19:1 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,2 "Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: 'You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy. NKJV

Romans 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will. NIV

"I beseech you," says Paul, "present your bodies a living sacrifice." The point to decide is this—"Do I agree with my Lord and Master that my body shall be His temple?" If so, then for me 'the whole of the law' for the body is summed up in this revelation, that my body is the temple of the Holy Ghost." Oswald Chambers, "My Utmost for His Highest," (United Kingdom: Marshall Morgan & Scott) c1927.

- You may remember from our study in Leviticus 17, how "the whole of the law" was a form of satanic worship through music.
- In both chapters 17 & 18, God is laying down "the whole of the law" for the Israelites in how they're to offer their sacrifices and worship.
- In other words, God did not want them worshipping the way the pagans did in their sexual and musical forms of worship to their gods.
- Now we see how "the whole of the law" relates not only to how music was a form of worship, but also how sex was a form of worship.

"Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law' is a moral utterance found in the Thelemic foundation scripture, ... **"Do what thou wilt"** is known as the Law of Thelema. Alistair Crowley was known for his unfettered exploration of sexual themes, including his own homosexuality. He undertook development of his own system of "scientific illuminism" which is documented in twenty-six official publications on regular ritual empowerment practices, "sex magick" (so-called), devotional worship, and hours of daily meditation.

- So back to our question of how do we offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God as our spiritual act of worship.

HOW TO WORSHIP WITH OUR BODY'S

THE MOUTH	1. Speaking - Psalm 34:1 "I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips." 2. Shouting - Psalm 27:6 "Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the Lord." 3. Singing - Psalm 47:6 Sing praises to God, sing praises to our King, sing praises."
THE LEGS	1. Bowing - Psalm 95:6 "Come let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." 2. Standing - Psalm 119:120 "My flesh trembles in fear of you; I stand in awe of your laws." 3. Dancing - Psalm 149:3 "Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp."
THE HANDS	1. Playing Instruments - Psalm 33:2, 3 "Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to him on the ten stringed lyre. Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy." 2. Clapping - Psalm 47:1 "Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy." 3. Lifting Hands - Psalm 63:4 "I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands."

- That's the "how" to worship, but what about the "what" of worship? In other words, what is worship? Consider the following:

Worship is honor, reverence, homage, in thought, feeling, or act, paid to men, angels, or other "spiritual" beings, and figuratively to other entities, ideas, powers or qualities, but specifically and supremely to Deity. The principal Old Testament word is "shachah" meaning to bow down, prostrate, fall down, serve, labor, and sacrifice. The principal New Testament word (59 times) is proskuneo, "kiss (the hand or the ground) toward," It is to render homage to men, angels, demons, the Devil, the "beast," idols, or to God.

(from International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1996 by Biblesoft)

A. W. Tozer, "Worship is to feel in your heart and express in some appropriate manner a humbling but delightful sense of admiring awe and astonished wonder and overpowering love in the presence of that most ancient Mystery, that Majesty which philosophers call the First Cause, but which we call Our Father Which Are in Heaven. ...Without worship, we go about miserable."

Quoted in D. J. Fant, A. W. Tozer, Christian Publications, 1964, p. 90

"God seeks and values the gifts we bring Him—gifts of praise, thanksgiving, service, and material offerings. In all such giving at the altar we enter into the highest experiences of fellowship. But the gift is acceptable to God in the measure to which the one who offers it is in fellowship with Him in character and conduct; and the test of this is in our relationships with our fellow men. We are thus charged to postpone giving to God (Matthew. 5:24) until right relationships are established with others. Could the neglect of this be the explanation of the barrenness of our worship?"

G. Campbell Morgan

"To praise God fully we must suppose ourselves to be in perfect love with God, drowned in, dissolved by that delight which, far from remaining pent up within ourselves as incommunicable bliss, flows out from us incessantly again in effortless and perfect expression. Our joy is no more separable from the praise in which it liberates and utters itself than the brightness a mirror receives is separable from the brightness it sheds. ... The most valuable thing the Psalms do for me is to express the same delight in God which made David dance."

C. S. Lewis

It makes me want to have an encounter with God. The purpose of the music of biblical worship is to enable the worshiper to encounter the living God. The musical experiences of worship are able to communicate both verbal and nonverbal messages to the worshiper; they "speak directly to the intuitive capacities... bearing a sense of majesty, wonder, mystery, and delight, and bringing a release of the soul even without recourse to words".

The Biblical Foundations of Christian Worship pp. 221-222

Worship Leader Lamar Boschman said; "When I worship, I would rather my heart be without words than my words be without heart."

"If we are going to worship in Spirit, we must develop a spirit of worship." Michael Catt

The term, "worship," like many other great words, such as "grace" and "love," defies adequate definition. The meaning of these words, like the exquisite perfume of a rose, or the delightful flavor of honey, is more easily experienced than described.

WORSHIP: THE CHRISTIAN'S HIGHEST OCCUPATION by A. P. Gibbs, (Walterick Publishers)

"Worship is the missing jewel in the Christian Church". A.W. Tozer

John 4:23-24 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." NIV

- Be that as it may, I think I would be remiss were I not to mention that there is a difference between worship and praise. Let me explain:

WORSHIP	PRAISE	DIFFERENCE
Heart	Word	Worship is primarily from one's heart, while praise is usually from ones words
Exalt	Express	Worship is to exalt, while praise is to express
Inward	Outward	Worship is inward, while praise is outward
Instrument	Voice	Worship is the instrument, while praise uses the voice as the instrument
Worth-ship	Ap-praise	Worship is because of the "worth-ship," while praise is to "appraise"
Pray	Say	Worship is to pray, while praise is to say
Need Praise	Don't Need Worship	Worship is in need of praise, while praise doesn't need to worship
Spirit	Truth	Worship is chiefly in spirit, while praise is chiefly in truth

- What worship is...

Bruce Leafblad - Worship is communion with God in which believers by grace set their minds' attention and their hearts' affection on the Lord, humbly glorifying Him for His goodness and His word.

Oswald Chambers – "Worship is giving God the best that He has given you. Be careful what you do with the best you have. Whenever you get a blessing from God, give it back to Him as a love gift. Take time to meditate before God and offer the blessing back to Him in a deliberate act of worship. If you hoard a thing of blessing for yourself, it will turn into spiritual dry rot, as the manna did when it was hoarded [Exodus 16]. God will never let you hold a spiritual thing for yourself, it has to be given back to Him that he may make it a blessing to others." MY UTMOST FOR HIS HIGHEST,

Graham Kendrick - "Worship is first and foremost for His benefit, not ours, though it is marvelous to discover that in giving Him pleasure, we ourselves enter into what can become our richest and most wholesome experience in life."

p.58 "A Heart For Worship" by Lamar Boschman

C. S. Lewis – "The most obvious fact about praise - whether of God or anything - strangely escaped me. ...The world rings with praise - lovers praising [each other], readers their favorite poet, walkers praising the countryside, players praising their favorite game - praise of ...children, flowers, even sometimes politicians or scholars. I had not noticed how the humblest, and at the same time most balanced and capacious, minds praise most, while the cranks, misfits and malcontents praise least. I had not noticed either that just as men spontaneously praise whatever they value, so they spontaneously urge us to join them in praising it: "Isn't she lovely? Wasn't it glorious? The Psalmists in telling everyone to praise God are doing what all men do when they speak of what they care about."

"Reflections on the Psalms", Harcourt Brace, 1964 - as quoted in "Space for God: The Study and Practice of Prayer and Spirituality" by Don Postma, CRC Publications, 1983

- What praise is...

Charles H. Spurgeon - "God is to be praised with the voice, and the heart should go therewith in holy exultation."

- Why we don't worship...

WE'RE TOO DISTRACTED - Some of God's best truths, like priceless treasures, are hidden in depths most folks never take the time to search out. We have made ourselves very complicated. Those who determine to simplify their lives quickly discover it is a rigorous solo voyage against the wind. Noise and words are frenzied, hectic schedules dull our senses, closing our ears to His still, small voice and making us numb to His touch. Noise and crowds have a way of siphoning our energy and distracting our attention, making prayer (worship) an added chore rather than a comforting relief. If the pace and push, the noise and the crowds are getting to you, it's time to stop the nonsense and find a place of solace to refresh your spirit. How busy we have become and as a result, how empty we have become. Simplicity, silence, solitude, and surrender (will make) the pause and the hush sing a double song... "Be still, and know"! Chuck Swindol "Intimacy with the Almighty"

Another reason we don't worship is because we don't have any quite time: "Silence takes the worshiper out of time and into God's eternity." Hill, Enter His Courts with Praise! p.106.

"In the presence of the mystery of the being of God, silence is an appropriate act of worship. ...In a service of worship, it is God himself who is the great Listener, who will refuse to hear if the music of the worshiper is not coming from a life that shows ...holiness."

The Biblical Foundations of Christian Worship, pp. 39, 290.

Habakkuk 2:20 But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him." NIV

- There's one last thing in need to address in the context of worship and it's the hymns as opposed to contemporary praise and worship.	
+ "Hymns have deep sentimental value, it's true worship."	
+ "Hymns bring me back to a place in time when I would be in church or with my family. It reminds of my parents."	
- "Hymns are old fashioned. I don't listen to the pipe organ on a CD in my car, why do it in church."	
- "Hymns are too wordy with many verses and I have to worry about the next verse instead of Worshiping God."	
+ "The praise and worship song is contemporary and therefore I like it better".	
+ "The praise and worship song is simple and therefore I can focus on worshipping".	
- "The praise and worship songs use drums, and drums are the devils instrument."	
- "The praise and worship song is too repetitive, shallow, and simple and should be more deep and complex."	
Hymns: <i>It is well, It is well, It is well, It is well with my soul.</i>	
Praise & Worship: <i>I could sing of Your love forever, I could sing of Your love forever, I could sing of Your love forever,</i>	
- It's been said that; "We don't know the music we love, we love the music we know".	
- I love both the Hymns of old and the new contemporary praise and worship, but when it comes to hymns, we all have favorites.	
1. Dentist's Hymn: "Crown Him with Many Crowns"	6. Tailor's Hymn: "Holy, Holy, Holy"
2. Weatherman's Hymn: "Showers of Blessing"	7. IRS Hymn: "All to Thee"
3. Contractor's Hymn: "The Church's One Foundation"	8. Gossiper's Hymn: "Pass it On"
4. Politician's Hymn: "Standing on the Promises"	9. Electrician's Hymn: "Send the Light"
5. Golfer's Hymn: "There Is a Green Hill Far Away"	10. Shopper's Hymn: "Sweet By and By"
Colossians 3:16 "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs..."	
Psalm 100:2 Come before him with joyful singing...	
Psalm 150:3-6 Praise him with trumpet sound; Praise him with harp and lyre. Praise him with timbrel and dancing; Praise him with stringed instruments and pipe. Praise him with loud cymbals; Praise him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!	